

NEWARK
PUBLIC
INFORMATION
OFFICE



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FOR RELEASE AFTER 12 NOON
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MAYOR SHARPE JAMES' STATEMENT
ON BUILDING A MINOR LEAGUE BASEBALL STADIUM IN NEWARK

"This is an exciting day for the City of Newark. Last month Prudential announced it was donating an additional \$3.5 million to the \$3 million it had already given to fund the great Prudential Hall of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center--opening in Newark in 1997. And today, we stand here. City and County, County Executive Jim Treffinger and myself to announce that we will build a minor league baseball stadium in Newark.

"New Jersey's largest city is a former minor baseball hub. The game has a strong history in Newark, where the Newark Bears played in Ruppert Stadium until 1950, and where as a young boy, I spent many hours with my brother and friends watching them. So many great heroes of my childhood played in Newark: Jackie Robinson, Roy Campanella, Monte Irvin, Yogi Berra. It is only fitting that we bring minor league baseball back to our city.

"This undertaking is one of the largest partnerships in which the City and County have been involved, and I salute Jim Treffinger for having the vision to provide the land and partial funding for this project. I also thank Sam Crane and the Regional Business Partnership, which has had a leadership role in the development of this facility.

"From the beginning, Newark has been unwavering in its support of this project. We have committed five million dollars to this stadium project to make it a reality. A minor league baseball stadium that will attract local fans and families to Newark, will only further enhance the Performing Arts Center. Local restaurants and businesses will benefit, as well other major recreational and cultural programs we are creating for our city, county and state.

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JAMES AD 1

"Mayor James Whelan of Atlantic City has been pushing for our inclusion in this Atlantic League, and I am grateful for his enthusiasm, input and support. Atlantic City is somewhat ahead of us, but with this announcement today, and commitment from the County, I expect us to catch up quickly. It is our intention that the stadium not be used solely for baseball, but will be a multi-use facility where soccer to be played on a world class level. The East Ward community, where the stadium will be sited is composed of numerous ethnic groups whose national pastime is soccer!"

REGARDING THE ESSEX COUNTY JAIL

"Both Essex County and the City of Newark are under a federal court order to improve the conditions of our jails and holding cells, respectively. A new jail will address this problem.

"Newark was never supposed to be in the jail business. We have holding facilities in our four precincts, but they are cells designed for just that, 'holding' of prisoners until they can be processed and transported to the County Jail. Both the City and County have been in violation of overcrowding conditions in our respective facilities, and neither of us is proud.

"The agreement we are announcing today is a win, win situation for both of us. Essex County will build a jail, and it will benefit Newark as well. We are viewing the facility as a tax ratable, in that Essex County will give us in lieu-of-tax payments for the complex. The jail will also provide job opportunities for Newark and Essex County citizens, and it will be a physical improvement on land that is currently lying dormant.